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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

5 July 1990

Soviet Views and Policy on the Kashmir Crisis [REDACTED]

Summary

Moscow is concerned about the Kashmir crisis but apparently believes an Indo-Pakistani war is unlikely in the near term. It will continue to urge Pakistan and India to seek a peaceful solution because Moscow believes a war would not serve any party's goals and could lead to the use of nuclear weapons. To avoid angering New Delhi, the Soviets will continue their political and military support for India and will oppose multilateral settlement efforts or US proposals for a superpower arms cutoff. They probably judge that India already has enough supplies to defeat Pakistan quickly and that a cutoff would only harm Soviet-Indian relations and not stop India from attacking. [REDACTED]

In the event of war, the Soviets would work for an immediate ceasefire to restore regional stability, ensure that Kashmir remains part of India, and avoid escalation to nuclear weapons. They would urge India to limit its offensive operations and try to deflect Indian requests for military supplies to avoid angering Islamic countries and appearing to fuel the conflict with more arms. Moscow, however, probably would send supplies if the US or China gave Pakistan substantial military supplies, the war became protracted, or India suffered military problems or a major defeat. Although the Soviets apparently believe that the risk of nuclear escalation is low, they would urge India to avoid forcing Islamabad into using nuclear weapons in an act of desperation. [REDACTED]

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] the Office of Soviet Analysis. Information available as of 20 June 1990 was used in its preparation. Comments and questions are welcome and may be directed to [REDACTED]

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Moscow's Interest in a Peaceful Settlement

Since tensions between India and Pakistan flared up again over Kashmir in January 1990, Moscow has repeatedly urged restraint to both Islamabad and New Delhi, stating that war is in no party's interests. The Soviets have continued to counsel both countries—[REDACTED] that the dispute should be settled on the basis of the 1972 Simla Accord, in which India and Pakistan agreed to resolve the problem through bilateral discussions. Moscow praised proposals on confidence-building measures in late May that included suggestions for joint Indo-Pakistani border patrolling and renewed negotiations, [REDACTED]. The Soviets would strongly approve of the Indo-Pakistani talks, planned for July 18, intended to allay tensions over Kashmir. [REDACTED]

Moscow favors a peaceful settlement because it probably believes that a continuing crisis and possibility of war seriously threaten Soviet interests in the region.

- The Soviets want to avoid tensions with the US and China over Kashmir.
- Disagreements about the level of Soviet military support for India would strain Moscow's relationship with New Delhi.
- Supporting India against Islamic Pakistan might cause further domestic unrest in USSR's Muslim-dominated Central Asian republics.
- Backing India against Pakistan also would damage Moscow's diplomatic interests in the Middle East, where the Soviets have been courting moderate Arab states and Iran.
- An Indo-Pakistani war would undermine Soviet efforts—especially since the advent of a democratic government in Islamabad—to improve ties to Pakistan. They also probably fear a war would lead to a coup and another conservative, Islamic military regime in Pakistan that would encourage anti-Soviet Muslim fundamentalism in the region.
- A war also raises the possibility that Pakistan or India might use nuclear weapons. [REDACTED]

The Soviets probably judge that an Indo-Pakistani war would disrupt US-Saudi-Pakistani arms support for the Afghan insurgents and thus strengthen the Soviet-backed Kabul regime. Nonetheless, Moscow also probably judges that this gain would be offset by the dangers such a war would pose to Soviet interests throughout the region. Moreover, the Soviets probably believe a cutoff of U.S. support will eventually occur anyway because of declining support in Washington for the Afghan insurgents. [REDACTED]

Support for India

The Soviets have largely supported India in the crisis by publicly endorsing New Delhi's position on the status of Kashmir. During the visit of the Indian Foreign Secretary to Moscow after tensions over Kashmir erupted, Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze stated that Kashmir was an "integral part of India" and condemned outside interference in Indian affairs, according to press reports. The Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet repeated these views during his visit to India in April 1990. Soviet media also have highlighted Pakistani meddling in Kashmir over the last six months. Some Soviet officials and a few of the more circumspect press reports, however, have indicated that Moscow realizes that the

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turmoil in Kashmir stems from New Delhi's mishandling of the situation and its repressive tactics to control it. [REDACTED]

The Soviets also have continued their military support to India. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the Soviets also have delivered MI-35 helicopters, T-72 tanks, BMP-2 armored personnel carriers, and SA-13 and SA-8 surface-to-air missiles. [REDACTED]

Outlook

Although Moscow has shown concern over the Kashmir crisis for several months, Soviet statements and actions suggest it believes war is unlikely in the near term. Soviet media publicity about the possibility of war has been sporadic during the past few months. The Soviets so far have not viewed the situation as serious enough to send a high-ranking envoy specifically to emphasize Moscow's concerns to either Islamabad or New Delhi. [REDACTED]

Continued Efforts to Prevent War. Moscow will rely primarily on bilateral channels to caution New Delhi and Islamabad about the danger of war and urge a peaceful settlement through Indo-Pakistani discussions. Although they will continue to participate in discreet unofficial UNSC Permanent Five talks in New York on Indo-Pakistani tensions, the Soviets will work against any formal UN discussions of the crisis or any joint PermFive action on it in deference to India's view that Kashmir is a domestic issue. The Soviets probably judge that they would have little influence to prevent a war if New Delhi decides to attack. [REDACTED]

Moscow will continue to refuse joint superpower efforts to defuse the crisis, again citing Indian opposition to making Kashmir an international issue. They also would fear that such joint efforts would give the appearance of a "superpower condominium" to its friends in the Third World. Soviet clients--Syria, PLO, Iraq, Algeria and Libya--already are anxious that Moscow will sell them out in favor of improved relations with the US. [REDACTED]

The Soviets probably will continue to ignore US suggestions that the superpowers cut off arms to their respective clients. Arms supplies are Moscow's key link to India, which the USSR regards as one of its most valued allies in the Third World and among its most profitable customers. The Soviets probably judge that their ability to use a cutoff to influence New Delhi is limited because India has a sufficient military stockpile to defeat Pakistan even if Soviet supplies were stopped. In Moscow's experience with Iraq and Syria, reductions in military deliveries or an arms cutoff do not necessarily control a client's behavior and risk Soviet relations with the client. [REDACTED]

Moscow likely will not be interested in any mediating or monitoring role between Pakistan and India. Although the Soviets sponsored talks between New Delhi and Islamabad--most notably in Tashkent in 1966 following the 1965 war--the Soviets have shown no inclination to mediate during the present tensions. Pakistan is interested in some form of Soviet involvement to ease tensions, but India probably would not welcome this because of its position that Kashmir is a domestic issue. Nor are the Soviets likely to be interested in Islamabad's offer to allow foreign observers to monitor the Indo-Pakistani border. Moscow's other pressing international and domestic issues, and a pending offer to mediate between Iran and Iraq probably add to the Soviets reluctance to become directly involved in the Kashmir crisis. [REDACTED]

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Soviet Behavior During a War. Moscow would urge restraint on both India and Pakistan in the event of war and would work towards an immediate cease-fire through the UN. Moscow's major goals in a new conflict--that Kashmir remain in India, stability be restored in South Asia, and avoiding escalation to nuclear weapons--are best achieved by a quick halt to hostilities. For these reasons, the Soviets probably would advise India to use restraint in any conflict with Pakistan. The Treaty of Peace, Friendship, and Cooperation signed by the USSR and India in August 1971--which requires mutual consultations if war threatens--would provide the Soviets with a legal basis for demanding close consultations with New Delhi. [REDACTED]

The Soviets probably believe India would quickly win a war--in two to three weeks--and therefore Moscow would not have to face the decision of responding to an Indian request for more military equipment. In the unlikely event that war continued for a few months, chances are better than even that the Soviets would deflect New Delhi's requests for more supplies, unless India were losing the war, because Moscow would not want to be seen as fueling the conflict. Although not refusing Indian requests outright, the Soviets would probably use a variety of excuses to delay deliveries. Soviet restraint, however, would depend on similar US reserve with Pakistan and the Soviet judgment that any Chinese supplies to Pakistan would not alter the course of the war. [REDACTED]

In the highly unlikely event that hostilities lasted for more than a few months, Moscow eventually would feel compelled to resupply India with spare parts and ammunition and replacements of Indian equipment--such as tanks and aircraft--lost in battle. Air delivery of such hardware would be difficult. Direct flights are impossible because the aircraft would have to fly over Pakistan or its ally China. An indirect, longer route would take Soviet transports over Muslim Middle East nations who also probably would not permit overflights. Resupply by sea, therefore, is the most likely option for Moscow. In a rapidly deteriorating situation, however, Indian military efforts might suffer because Soviet resupply by sea would take at least two weeks. [REDACTED]

Moscow apparently believes that the risk of an Indo-Pakistani war escalating to the use of nuclear weapons is low, especially if New Delhi pursues limited military objectives. The possibility of either side using nuclear weapons has been raised in the Soviet media, but only in passing. In late May, for example, *Pravda* noted the Indian public's concern about Western press reports alleging that Pakistan might use nuclear weapons in a war. The Soviet media apparently addressed this issue, however, because of Indian distress over press rumors, not because of a Soviet perception of a rising danger that nuclear weapons would be used. At least two Soviet press articles, however, recently criticized India for its nonaccession to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, indicating that this will likely become a more contentious bilateral issue in the future. [REDACTED]

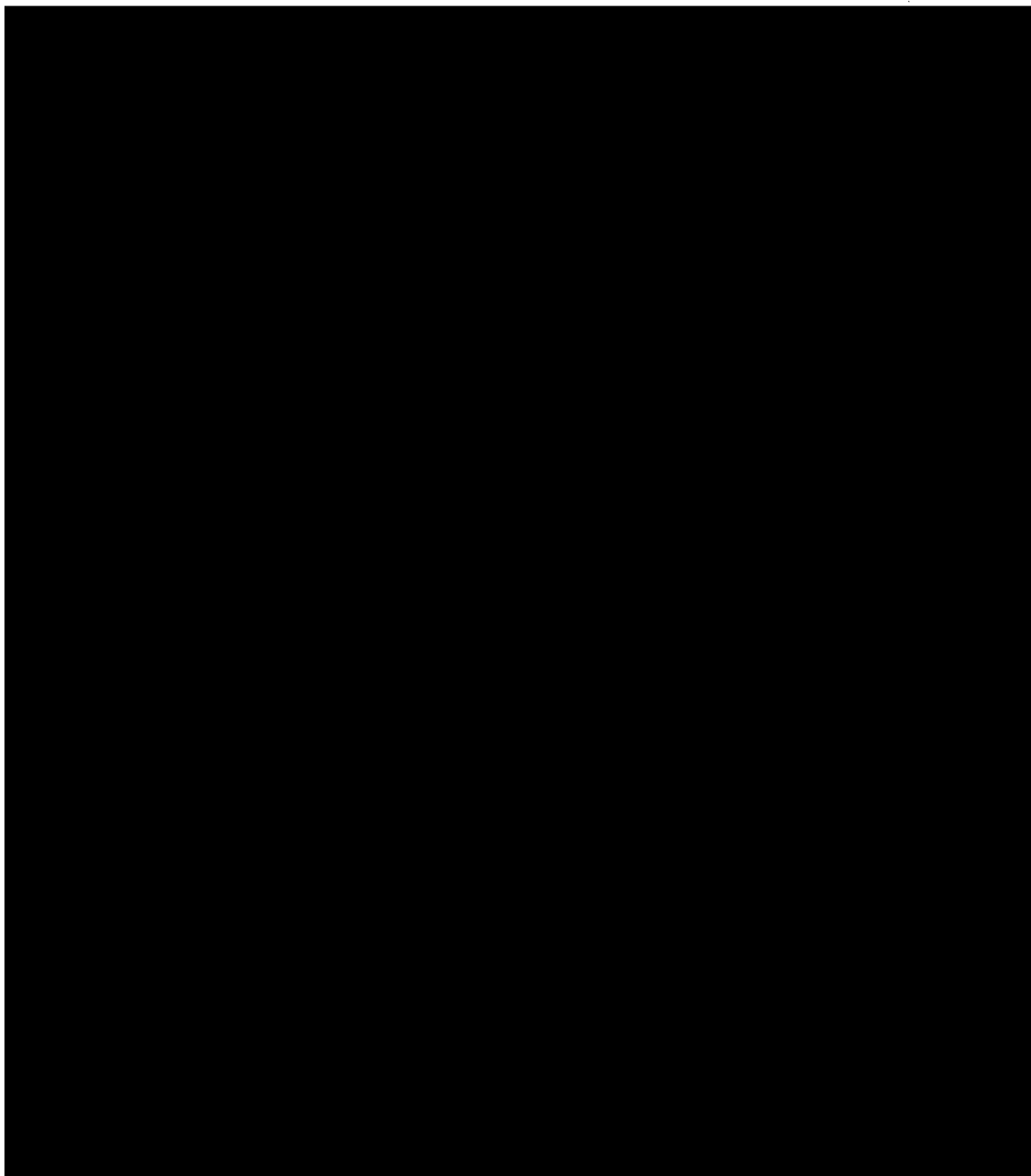
The Soviets probably have only limited leverage to persuade either belligerent not to use nuclear arms. Their main focus would be to encourage India to cease hostilities before Pakistan became so desperate that it threatened a nuclear strike. Moscow probably judges that Pakistan would need a few weeks to assemble a deliverable nuclear weapon. The Soviets also would work through any available channels--including the UN and the US--to pressure the belligerents to forgo the use of nuclear weapons. [REDACTED]

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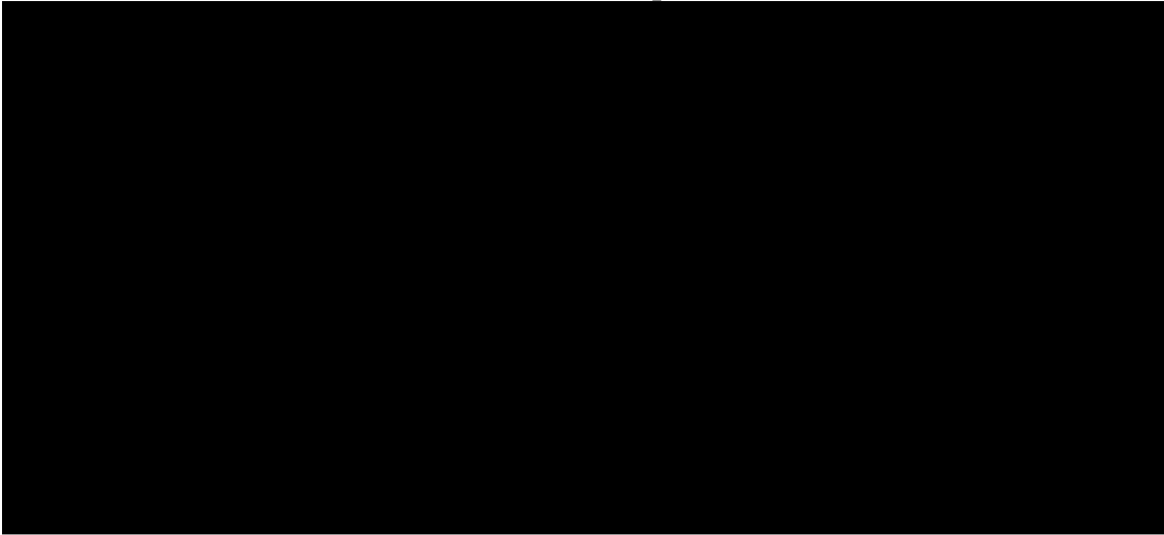
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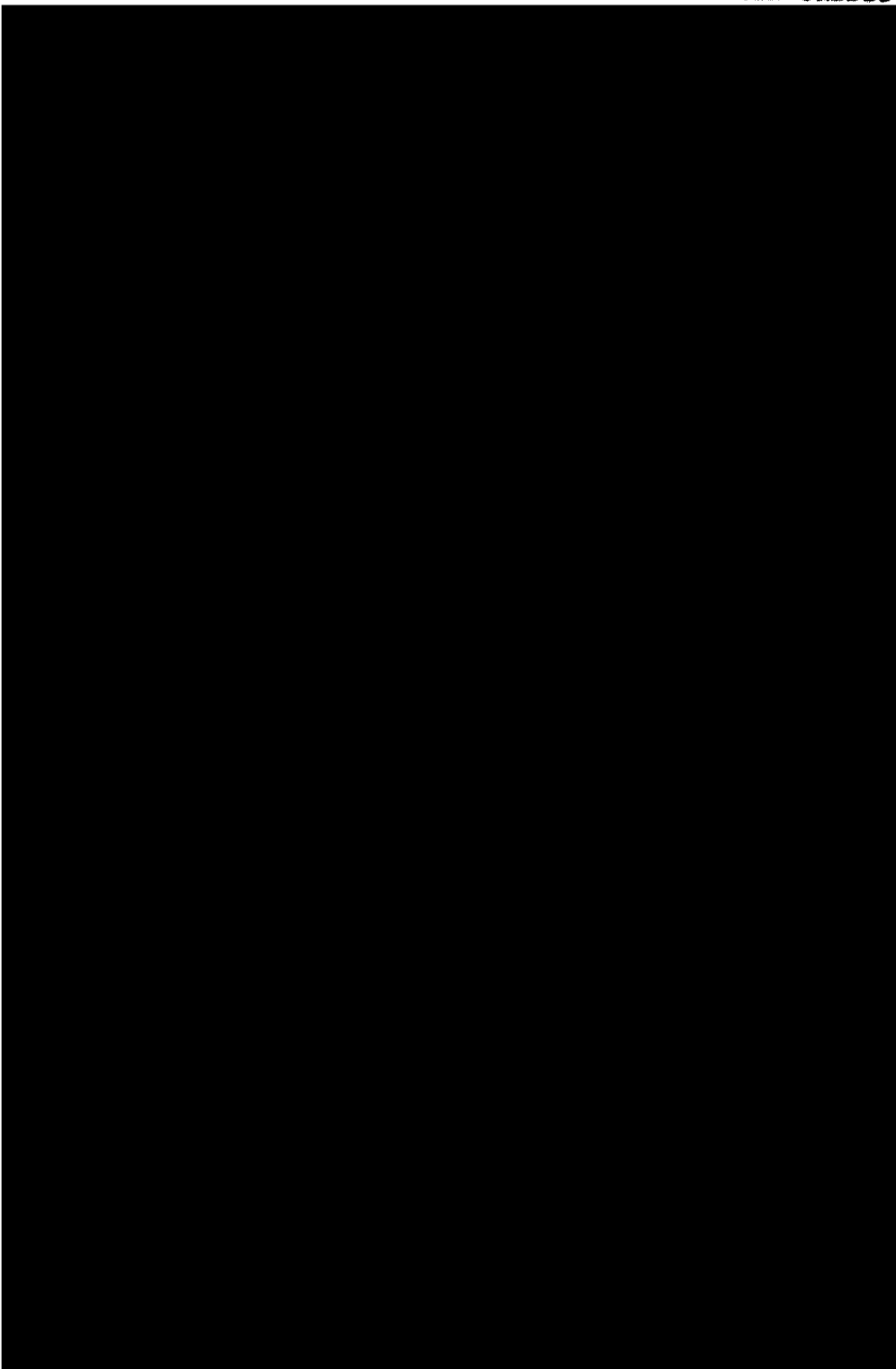
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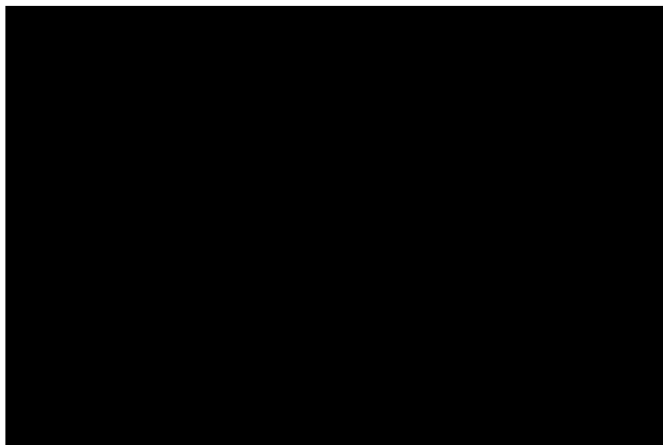
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